



SDMS DocID 2050963

## Bally Groundwater Contamination Superfund Site Cleanup UPDATE

*The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is evaluating the current treatment system at the Bally Borough, Berks County, Pennsylvania, municipal water supply. This action is being taken because a solvent, called 1,4-dioxane, was recently detected in the municipal water supply at very low levels. This fact sheet is intended to provide Bally Borough Water customers with information regarding 1,4-dioxane and EPA's review of the treatment system currently operated by American Household, Inc. under an EPA Superfund Consent Decree.*

### You're Invited to Attend

#### Informal Public Information Sessions

**March 19, 2003**

**10:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon  
or 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.**

at

**The Bally Firehouse  
537 Chestnut Street, Bally**

Please stop by at your convenience and talk with representatives of the Borough, EPA, PADEP, or American Household, Inc. about the water quality issues.

### Or Attend

#### A Formal Public Meeting

**March 19, 2003**

**6:30 - 8:30 p.m.**

at

**The Bally Firehouse  
537 Chestnut Street, Bally**

To hear a formal presentation about the water quality issues.

**Please Note:** 1,4-Dioxane is not "dioxin" nor is it related to dioxin.

### Why Is EPA Re-Evaluating the Borough Water Treatment System?

Advances in technology used to analyze chemicals helped EPA detect low levels of 1,4-dioxane in the municipal water supply. The discovery of 1,4-dioxane prompted EPA to re-evaluate the current treatment system at the Bally Groundwater Site.

EPA is working closely with the Bally Borough, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and American Household, Inc. to determine the best way to address the 1,4-dioxane.

The levels of 1,4-dioxane in the municipal water supply do not present an immediate health threat. However, EPA is concerned about the levels over the long-term and that's why the agency is reviewing the municipal drinking water supply and treatment system.

The Bally water supply system is currently being treated by American Household, Inc., formerly known as Sunbeam Corporation, under an EPA Consent Decree. The Decree resulted from an investigation EPA conducted in the 1980s. At the time, EPA was concerned with 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA) contamination resulting from manufacturing activities by Bally Engineered Structures (BES).

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Unlike TCA, 1,4-dioxane cannot be removed from water by air-strippers, such as those being used on the Bally municipal water system.

**What is 1,4-Dioxane?** 1,4-dioxane is a solvent used as a degreasing agent and as a stabilizer for more volatile chlorinated solvents, such as TCA. 1,4-dioxane is also an unintentional additive in many cosmetics and toiletries, and may be present in products used in our homes, such as paint, varnish, and degreasers. 1,4-dioxane is also used in the manufacture/extraction of fats, oils, waxes, and resins; and in the pulping of wood.

**Has EPA found 1,4-Dioxane in the Bally Borough Public Water Supply?** Yes, at very low levels. EPA samples show that 1,4-dioxane is present at a concentration of approximately 20 to 50 parts per billion (ppb). These levels do not present an immediate threat to public health, however, long-term exposure at these levels is of concern to EPA and that's why the agency is reviewing the municipal drinking water supply and treatment system.

**What Levels Are Considered Protective of Human Health?** No federal drinking water standard has been established for 1,4-dioxane. EPA would consider 1,4-dioxane an immediate public health threat if levels were in the 600 ppb range. EPA's Superfund program has a clean up goal of 6 ppb that is protective of human health for long term exposure.

**What Are Potential Health Effects Associated with 1,4-Dioxane?** When talking about health effects, it is important to

know that the effects depend on the level of exposure a person has to a compound. The level of exposure is determined, primarily, by the concentration (strength) of the compound and the period of time an individual is exposed to it.

EPA classifies 1,4-dioxane as a *Probable Human Carcinogen*. To date, 1,4-dioxane has not been shown to cause or increase the incidence of cancer in humans. However, 1,4-dioxane has been demonstrated to cause or increase the incidence of cancer in animal studies. Because of the results from these animal studies, EPA assumes that 1,4-dioxane could cause cancer in people as well.

**What Happens Next?** After reviewing the data and existing literature, EPA will determine the best method to ensure a permanent drinking water supply that protects human health.

The plan to provide an alternative water supply will be presented to the public, and a public comment period will be held. All recipients of Bally public water will be notified by mail of EPA's decision and of any additional steps that need to be taken.

**What Should I do to Protect Myself and My Family While EPA is Completing its**

**Evaluation?** The current levels of 1,4-dioxane do not present an immediate risk to human health. However, long-term exposure to this chemical is of concern to EPA and that's why the agency is reviewing the municipal drinking water supply treatment system. An ongoing effort is underway to identify an alternative source of drinking water for the Borough. In the meantime, American Household, Inc. has offered to provide bottled water to those who may have concerns, even though

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the water supply does not present an immediate health concern. American Household, Inc. is currently developing plans to distribute the water.

EPA will continue to provide updated information to the public and Bally Borough about the treatment system and ongoing cleanup of the groundwater.

Residents are also encouraged to attend the public information sessions or public meeting on March 19 for more information.

### **For More Information**

For additional information about the topics discussed in this fact sheet or to discuss any questions or concerns you may have, please contact:

**Carrie Deitzel**  
EPA Community Involvement  
Coordinator  
215-814-5525  
1-800-353-2509 (toll-free)  
[deitzel.carrie@epa.gov](mailto:deitzel.carrie@epa.gov)

**Mitch Cron**  
EPA Remedial Project Manager  
215-814-3286  
[cron.mitch@epa.gov](mailto:cron.mitch@epa.gov)

Or visit our website at:  
[www.epa.gov/superfund](http://www.epa.gov/superfund)

**USEPA Region III**  
**1650 Arch Street**  
**Mail Code: 3HS43**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19103-2029**

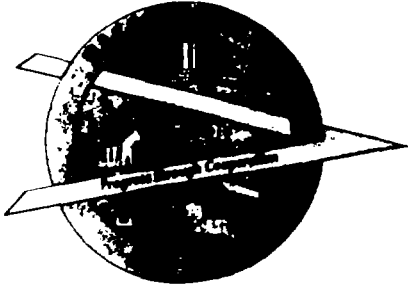
### **How Common Is 1,4 Dioxane?**

Some interesting facts about the prevalence of 1,4-dioxane in the U.S. include:

***In Cosmetics & Toiletries:*** 1,4-dioxane is an unintentional additive in many commercial cosmetics and toiletries (e.g., shampoos, liquid soaps, lotions). A number of studies have found 1,4-dioxane in one-half or more of tested cosmetics, with levels ranging from 3,000 to 100,000 ppb. The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has recognized the presence of 1,4-dioxane in these products and notes "... it is uncertain how much is available for absorption [into the body] and how much evaporates instead of penetrating the skin."

***In Food:*** Human exposure may also occur due to the potential presence of 1,4-dioxane in foods. 1,4-Dioxane may gain access to foods due to its presence in some adhesives used in packaging or from the use of pesticides (where 1,4-dioxane is an "inert ingredient"). FDA has recognized this exposure and approved 1,4-dioxane as an unintentional food additive.

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425 Chestnut Street • P.O. Box 217 • Bally, PA 19503-0217  
(610) 845-2351 • Fax (610) 845-2023

March 13, 2003

Re: Water Quality Issue

Dear Residents:

Accompanying this letter you will find information concerning a newly-discovered contaminant in the Borough water supply. Many of you have been through this type of situation before. The good news is that the level of contamination involved in this instance is significantly lower than the contamination levels we were dealing with when TCE and TCA contamination was first discovered in the municipal wells in the late 1980's

Please be assured that the United States EPA, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and your Borough officials are working diligently to help identify a method of treatment, which will reduce the level to the newly federally established safe level for drinking water. There are treatment options available.

As I am certain you are disappointed and perhaps somewhat frightened by this news, please know that we in the Borough government are equally disappointed and equally concerned. For years we believed that the contamination in our drinking water was being managed by the treatment programs in place. Now we find out that was not true. We will not rest, and we will not let those people responsible for our water quality rest, until a treatment program is in place, which will again provide all of us with water which meets the safe drinking water standards. And our long-term goal will continue to be to get a new, clean, and safe supply of drinking water for all of us, and for those citizens of Bally who come after us.

Please read the information which accompanies this letter, and consider attending one of the public meetings that will be held and are listed on the EPA fact sheet.

If you have questions, you may ask them at that time. If you have specific questions before then, please call the EPA hotline number contained in the enclosed information. Just as we managed to get through the water crisis in the 1980's, we can work our way through this problem. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely yours,

Toni Hemerka  
Bally Borough Manager

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Este informe contiene informacion muy importante sobre su agua de beber.  
Traduzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

### 1,4-DIOXANE WAS DETECTED IN THE BALLY BOROUGH WATER SYSTEM

1,4-Dioxane, an unregulated contaminant, was recently detected in your drinking water. Although this is not an emergency, as a customer, you have a right to know what is in your drinking water, what you should do, and what is being done to investigate the situation.

Bally Borough does not routinely monitor for unregulated contaminants such as 1,4-Dioxane. At the request of EPA, samples were collected on February 19, 2003. These samples showed levels of 1,4-Dioxane in the range of 20 to 50 parts per billion (ppb). 1,4-Dioxane does not have an enforceable maximum contaminant level (MCL) for drinking water. Instead, the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) defers to the Superfund maximum regulatory authority limits developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

EPA classifies 1,4-Dioxane as a probable human carcinogen. This means that there is sufficient evidence in animals of a link to cancer, but inadequate or no evidence in humans. EPA has set the following health advisory for 1,4-Dioxane:

**Superfund Remediation Goal = 6 ppb** (The concentration of the chemical in drinking water corresponding to an increased estimated 30 year cancer risk of 1 in 1,000,000. This means if you consume 2 liters of this water daily for 30 years your cancer risk would increase by 1 in 1,000,000)

#### ***What should I do?***

This is not an immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. Point of use treatment devices such as filters and carbon do not remove 1,4-Dioxane. If you want to limit your exposure to the 1,4-Dioxane in the municipal water supply, you should use an alternative (e.g. bottled) water supply. However, you do not need to use an alternative water supply. If you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor.

#### ***What is 1,4-Dioxane?***

1,4-Dioxane is used as a stabilizer for chlorinated solvents such as 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA). The chemical is also used as a solvent for cellulose, resins, oils and waxes and can be found in some personal hygiene products such as shampoo and bubble bath.

#### ***What is being done?***

Personnel from Bally Borough, the EPA and DEP and American Household Inc. (F/K/A Sunbeam Corporation) are involved in an ongoing investigation and are evaluating various options. Although it is not required, American Household Inc. is making arrangements to provide bottled water to consumers who want to limit their exposure to the 1,4-Dioxane in the municipal water supply. You will be provided with periodic updates on the status of your drinking water. EPA is planning to host public meetings on Wednesday March 19, 2003 to discuss this situation. Details of these meetings are on the attached information sheet provided by the EPA.

For more information, please contact Toni Hemerka at (610)845-2351.

*Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*

This notice is being sent to you by Borough of Bally Water System.

PWS ID#: 3060002

Date distributed: March 13, 2003

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**BOYERTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
EDUCATION CENTER

"to enable all students to succeed in a changing world"

March 13, 2003

Dear Faculty, Staff and Parents of Washington Elementary School:

This morning school district officials were invited to Bally Borough Hall to hear a presentation about the Bally borough water supply, which supplies the Washington Township Municipal Authority (WTMA) with water. Since September 2001 the Washington Elementary School has been supplied with water from this source through WTMA.

At this meeting we were provided with information about a newly discovered contaminant in the water source. Prior to recent developments, this contaminant was impossible to detect. Attached is a summary of the information that Boyertown Area School District officials received.

Beginning Monday, March 17, 2003 bottled water will be provided at Washington Elementary School for drinking and food preparation. This bottled water will be available until the problem is resolved.

Please review the attached information. You are welcome to attend any of the meetings as listed on the attached *United States Environmental Protection Agency Update*. Mitch Cron, EPA Remedial Project Manager is available to answer technical questions. His telephone number and e-mail address are listed on the last page of the EPA Update.

Rest assured that the Boyertown Area School District will continue to monitor this situation and keep you informed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles D. Amuso".

Charles D. Amuso  
Superintendent

amcc

Enclosure

c Mr. Mitch Crone, EPA Remedial Project Manager  
Toni Hemerka, Bally Borough Manager

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